



Advocates for people with intellectual disabilities
and related developmental disabilities

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Testimony before Committee on Appropriations

Re: The Governor's March 1, 2010 Deficit Mitigation Plan

Leslie Simoes, Assistant Executive Director/The Arc of Connecticut

Good morning Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and Members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Leslie Simoes the Assistant Executive Director of The Arc of Connecticut, a 58-year-old statewide advocacy organization for individuals with intellectual disabilities and their families. We have 23 local chapters that provide supports, services, and advocacy for individuals with intellectual disabilities throughout Connecticut.

I am here today to testify regarding "**The Governor's March 1, 2010 Deficit Mitigation Plan**", as it directly impacts the network of Private Providers in Connecticut and more importantly, all the individuals and families that they serve. For years the private providers have served these individuals with dignity and quality and yet for years private providers have been consistently under-funded. In addition, they have been continuously subjected to unfunded mandates, lack of adequate cost of living increases and extensive rate changes.

Today, Private Providers are barely being funded enough to provide just for health and safety needs of individuals, and we do not consider that is an appropriate quality of life for the people in their care.

Our concerns are not new and we are complete baffled as to how to impress upon this Committee and the Legislature as a whole as to the growing crisis happening around Connecticut as we sit here today. As advocates – representatives of our Association have been contacting the changing administrations in the Governor's office and coming before different Legislative Committees for over 20 years, describing the predicaments of individuals with disabilities and families and how important supports and services are to all of them. And today is no different.

The Arc/Connecticut, Inc. Member Chapters: Futures, Inc., Middletown / Greater Enfield Arc / Family Options, Watertown / The Arc of Farmington Valley / Friends of New Milford, Inc. / The Arc of Litchfield County / LOV-Arc, Westbrook / MARC, Inc., Manchester / MARC: Community Resources, Portland / The Arc of Meriden-Wallingford / The Arc of Greater New Haven / The Arc of New London County / Options, Unlimited / The Arc of Plainville / The Arc of Quinebaug Valley / SARAH Inc., Guilford / SARAH Seneca Residential Services / SARAH Tuxis Residential Services / STAR, Norwalk / The Arc of Southington / Tri County Arc, Columbia / Waterbury Arc / WeCAHR, Danbury

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While the Governor's current Deficit Mitigation Plan does not ask for any more new recessions from the Department of Developmental Services – it does continue to include cuts that total \$250,000 in Employment Opportunities and Day Programs and \$55,000 in Cooperative Placement Programs. These cuts will most certainly have an impact on Providers and thereby impact the people they serve!

In times of economic crisis – history has proven again and again that case loads and the need for services will continue to grow, and yet cuts to continue to happen with little acknowledgement that adequate funding is needed in order for these vital services to continue to operate.

We urge you to restore these proposed rescissions as well as legislate adequate funding in order for the Private Providers to remain a viable and efficient option for care – *especially* in a time when Human Services' supports will be needed more than ever. Otherwise, it is simply an injustice to people of Connecticut with intellectual disabilities, their families, and people who support them.

Please make no mistake, the Private Providers can do this very challenging work – and can do it more efficiently, **BUT they can not do it for nothing or when their funding is repeatedly cut.**

Thank you.